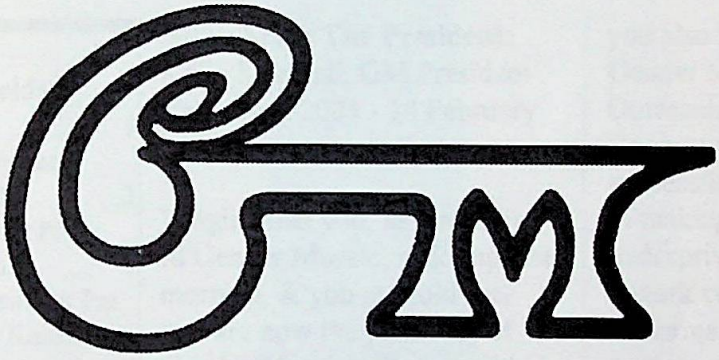
Notes From The UnderGround



Our 16th Anniversary Edition

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Notes From The Underground

A FREE PUBLICATION

SEEING IS BELIEVING - SO BE SEEN

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Notes From The President:
Zelda Marshall, GM President
September 2003 - 14 February 2004

Imagine that you, as a member of Gender Mosaic, wake up one morning, & you are told that you are now the president of Gender Mosaic! That would likely make you want to pull the covers back over your head & wish that the rest of the world would go away, right?

Well fortunately for me it wasn't that bad – I had some great support to help me through these almost 5 months as your interim president. So much of this "word from the president" will be taken up with "thanks".

The first & biggest thanks goes to my life partner & your former president, Jan Hobbs. Thank you for showing me what needed to be done, & in many cases even doing it for me, as an "Executive Assistant". Thank you also for staying on as Gender Mosaic's Community Outreach person.
Congratulations on another successful year in that capacity of making sure that some underprivileged children in Lanark county could still have a Christmas, thus relieving their parents of having to go through what you yourself have had to do in the past – dealing with the disappointment & sadness that the children feel when they see that they don't get Christmas this year. Thank you for your dedication to this task. I know you were disappointed by the drop in support that came this year, but let's focus instead on the number of children in whose lives we were able to make a difference this year. And with that, I thank all of you GM members who rallied to Jan's call & supplied gifts for children from the list we received from the Lanark County OPP.

Thank you to Nelia for

organizing such a great Christmas party. Your dedication to making sure we could have one is nothing short of inspirational, & all the more so when we remember that you aren't even a member of GM. You showed us that we could still have a Christmas party at an external location, with prizes & fun contests & dancing, & still do it profitably. I hope the experience was very rewarding & enriching for you. I know it was probably an eye-opener for you too, such as when you initially visited different establishments to find a location for the party, & you found out which establishments would definitely welcome our business, as opposed to those who would merely tolerate our presence (& then only if we kept a sufficiently low profile). Thanks you looking out for us so well! And thank you again to Jan, for all the goodies you collected from local businesses for the 2 Adult XXX Gift Baskets that were raffled off. Thank you Margo to the 2 delicious torts you made & donated for raffles.

Thank you to all who got politically involved! Thank you for your bravery & your willingness to stick out your necks & be noticed. We have to be visible if we want things to change for the better for us. Samantha, Shannon, Jan, Margo, Amanda, Joanne: I remember especially the meeting we were all at with Svend Robinson, MP, in the West Block of Parliament Hill back on Tuesday 4 November. He certainly knows now that transgender should not have been left out of Bill C-250, eh? So he has given us a challenge to fix that – let's do it, girls!

Thank you to the other members of the GM Executive – Margo our secretary, & Norma our other Vice-President. Thank you for not submitting resignations when I took over as President! Seriously, thank you for staying with the GM Executive, & for all the insight you gave & suggestions for how we could do things better. We are all of us accountable to the membership – thank you for all your support.

Additionally, there are 3 things on which I can look back & feel good about having been the GM president. The first of these is the re-instatement of the monthly discussion groups. It is one of the first things I did when I took over as president. The general impression I have from you, the GM membership, is that you are glad to have these back. And so it was on that first such discussion group on Tuesday 30 September (starting the tradition of last Tuesday of every month), that many of us met to discuss "Are We Having Fun Yet?" – how can we make it more fun to be a member of GM. Thank you to all who have come to each of our discussion groups, because it is you & the contributions that you make that determine the success of each discussion group. And a thank you also to Jan who, although she would make herself absent for each discussion group, always ensured that coffee, tea, & at least one kind of snack would be available before she left.

The second such thing was to get a book review done. The GM mailbox received a complimentary copy of "Transgender Good News" by Dr. Pat Conover, with a request that this book be reviewed by us. I held onto it for a while, being personally interested in the subject matter (transgender from a Christian viewpoint), but having so little time, I was happy to pass the book onto someone else who was far more qualified than I to review it. (You'll see her review further in this newsletter – the book will be in the Gender Mosaic library.) The 3rd thing was to hand-deliver letters of thanks to each of the businesses that contributed to those Adult XXX Gift Baskets we raffled off at the Christmas party. It was truly a pleasure to tell them how much we appreciated the donations, & in more than one case, we were told that they would be pleased to contribute again next year. It is a very fun & satisfying feeling to know that we are building & re-enforcing bridges to the community in general.

Now as many of you know, I have chosen not to re-run as president of GM since I am taking on some new challenges in my "day job". But I will continue to offer my services to the new Executive as Treasurer, thus providing some continuity. Likewise, I ask all of you to support your new Executive – there may be some new faces there, so let's make their 1st time on the GM Executive a pleasant one.
Love & Hugs to All
Your Interim President
Zelda

Notes from Your President Elect - Lauren Mulvihill

When I walked across the parking lot to my first GM social my legs were shaking and my heart thumping. I held tight to the shepherds pie I had brought, assured that any group of people who met over a potluck couldn't be that scary. And I was right. I found answers, assurance, friendship. In Gender Mosaic I found a safe place where I could find myself. I found out that I wasn't the only one.

I believe that trans people are going to be making tremendous gains in the next few years. We are on the verge of understanding and redefining transgenderism, of finally attaining legal protection, and public acceptance is increasing. Many who will play a leading role will have taken their first baby steps in the security that Gender Mosaic offers. The group has protected, developed, educated many who will make a contribution in her or his own way.

But Gender Mosaic must always be a place of safety, information, assurance , comfort and friendship. I was honoured to be asked to serve on the executive; I accepted because when I called for help, someone answered. I hope that I can help make certain that someone will always be there to answer.

I want to thank the past executive for making the changeover so easy. I am looking forward to working with the new executive, Margo, Sophy, Zelda and Amanda and those who have generously volunteered to serve on committees, Jan on Community Outreach, Joanne on Membership, Teddy on Library, Kaitlin as Ombudsperson and Margo doing double duty on the newsletter. Samantha has taken on the enormous job of redesigning and updating the web site and we should all be ready to help her with this. I want to thank Linda for her work on the site. I know how time consuming every change is.

I hope in future reports I will be able to relate new initiatives we are taking and recount with pride the accomplishments that I know there will be. Thank you for your trust.

By ADAM GELLER
Associated Press, June 4, 2003
NEWARK, N.J. -- By June, people in the Quantitative Management department were trading whispers across the rows of cubicles.

What's wrong with Mark Stumpp? Why had he dropped so much weight so quickly? Was he sick? Nobody knew.

One day after lunch, Mr. Stumpp handed a small, framed snapshot to Jim Scott, his friend and co-manager in the department at Prudential Financial Inc. for 14 years.

"Do you know who that is?" Mr. Stumpp asked.

Mr. Scott glanced at the picture of a tall woman with blonde bangs and shook his head. He had never seen her.

"That's the person you're going to be working with a year from now," Mr. Stumpp said.

Puzzled, Mr. Scott looked at the photo again, then back at Mr. Stumpp. The lady in the photograph, Mr. Stumpp said, is going to be me.

Prudential's QM department manages billions of dollars of other people's money. It's a business that relies on a nurtured image of solidity, on the value implicit in long-time relationships.

And so, as word of Mr. Stumpp's intensely private decision spread through Prudential's Newark headquarters, people realized this wasn't going to be about just him. It was going to be about them, too.

Mr. Stumpp was uncomfortable in Mark's body as far back as memories reach. Deep inside, at the nexus of body and mind, something felt terribly wrong.

"A malaise of the soul," Mr. Stumpp says.

It is called gender dysphoria, a condition characterized by intense feelings of being the wrong gender. No one knows for sure what causes it.

Since the 1960s, thousands of people have quietly undergone hormone treatment and surgery to change gender. Most dropped out of their previous lives, resurfacing somewhere else with new identities.

Today, "more and more people are recognizing that this is not something that they have to be ashamed of," says Eli Coleman, director of the Program in Human Sexuality at the University of Minnesota.

So perhaps it was just a matter of time before it happened at Prudential, a company with 61,000 people on its payroll. But in 22 years at Prudential, the last half working on personnel issues, Ron Andrews, a vice-president of human resources, "had never encountered a more difficult issue."

"What was difficult about this," he said, "is I didn't know anything."

Mr. Stump, 51, had a reputation as one of the office's "class clowns." He dropped jokes into the middle of meetings, walked around the office without shoes, wore jeans when everyone else wore a suit.

But he was an acknowledged expert in the serious business of making money grow, and his department, a group of about 35 people, manages $32-billion (U.S.) on behalf of client pension funds and other institutional investors. Prudential's own $8-billion in pension funds is managed here.

"My business is about trust," Mr. Stumpp says, and he knew trust would not be enhanced if people saw him "turn into a girl."

So for years, Mr. Stumpp postponed gender reassignment surgery. But in 1999, after seeing a therapist, he started taking estrogen and undergoing electrolysis -- all part of a still reversible journey into what it might be like to be a woman.

It was two years before his co-workers began to notice he was changing -- and to worry. The hormones were reshaping his body. Enlarged breasts could be hidden in loose-fitting shirts, but there was no way to disguise the disappearance of muscle.

In the summer of 2001, the few executives at Prudential who knew what was going on realized that the problem wasn't that Mr. Stumpp was changing his gender. It was that he was coming back to work afterward.

It was one thing to figure out how the QM department would go on without Mark. It was quite another to figure out how to continue with someone named Maggie in his place.

Someone was going to have to explain this delicate situation in Prudential's executive offices, to the company's clients, to the marketing and sales representatives who vouched for Mr. Stumpp's research.

Bringing it all together was Mr. Andrews's job.

Throughout the summer and into the fall, Mr. Andrews worked his way down a list of people who needed to know, figuring out not just who they would tell in turn, but how they would do it.

In one months-long thread of calls, meeting and memos, he,

company lawyers and sales managers drew up a list of 30 clients that relied on Mr. Stumpp's research and investment strategies.

They decided that a Prudential customer relationship manager would contact each one to explain who would soon be handling their money. And then Mr. Andrews and his group wrote a script -- not word for word, but an extended outline with "key communication points."

"We wanted our clients and our customers not to hear this from some sort of grapevine," Mr. Andrews says. "We wanted to make sure they heard it from us."

In the QM department, though, Mr. Stumpp's story was still known only to Mr. Scott and another employee, Stacie Mintz. So, after Mr. Stumpp left on an unexplained medical leave in January, 2002, Mr. Scott called the homes of everyone in the department.

"I need to talk to you about Mark," began each conversation.

Next morning, in the parking garage, Ms. Mintz ran into the a co-worker she thought most likely to have a problem with the new Ms. Stumpp.

"Isn't that amazing about Mark?" Ms. Mintz said, and then held her breath for the answer.

"Well, if it makes her happy, it makes her happy," the worker replied. A few days later, on Jan. 8, a two-page memo arrived in the e-mail box of everyone in the department.

"From: M. Stumpp"
"Subject: Me."
The note poked fun at the situation, but also appealed for understanding. And it emphasized that returning to work was something Ms. Stumpp had a legal right to do.

"This will be new ground for all of us," Ms. Stumpp wrote. "However, if September 11 taught us anything, it was that life is far too precious and short. Each of us must strive to be at peace with ourselves." She signed the note "Margaret."

The note leapfrogged around the company, and soon employees started e-mailing back. Many, including some top executives, expressed support. A few of the women offered to help Ms. Stumpp pick out clothes.

Some took more convincing. In the weeks before Ms. Stumpp's scheduled return date -- Monday, Feb. 4 -- Ms. Mintz says it felt like there was a line of co-workers at her door, mostly concerned about how to act when Mark walked in as Margaret.

Ms. Stumpp, recuperating at home, offered to return at first in men's clothes if it would make people more comfortable.

No, his fellow workers replied, if you're Maggie, then come back as Maggie. We're as ready as we'll ever be.

Maggie Stumpp made it to the fourth floor before nearly everyone else that first morning back. Her co-workers walked in and there she was, joking about the joy of being thin, of having to wear pantyhose, of how hard it had been to find shoes in her size.

"It was awkward, but . . . it was kind of a relief to have it all out in the open, and to have all the questions about what she was going to look like answered," Ms. Mintz says.

It was a beginning. One of the first trials came a few weeks after Ms. Stumpp's return, when they took a call from a long-time client, a labour union whose members' reputations did not gibe with her heels and pantyhose.

The union officials asked to meet Ms. Stumpp to re-evaluate her suitability to continue managing their business. The department braced to lose the account.

They met over dinner at a steakhouse. The first few hours were spent discussing the stock

market and the economy, smoothed over by a couple of drinks. Gradually, the men's doubts appeared to ease.

"You know, you really don't look so bad," one leaned over to tell Ms. Stumpp. She chalked it up as a compliment. Prudential kept the account.

Inside Prudential, however, there were still some tensions. To ease the uncertainties of some female colleagues, Mr. Andrews set aside a small bathroom for her for six months. After that she could use the women's room.

Six months and a day after Ms. Stumpp returned, a female employee protested Ms. Stumpp's presence in the adjoining stall of the women's room.

"Grow up!" Mr. Andrews told her, intentionally setting a tone. While the company did not expect all its employees to accept Ms. Stumpp personally, they would be expected to do so professionally.

There are still moments when Ms. Stumpp feels the stares, imagines that every woman at Prudential is rating her performance. There are inevitable stumbles and awkward moments.

"The hardest thing is the pronouns," Mr. Scott says. "It just drives me crazy.

Earlier this year, Ms. Mintz was digging around for an article that Jim Scott, Mark Stumpp and a colleague wrote in 1999 for an industry magazine. When she found it, she did a double-take. At Scott's request, the article had been newly credited to Margaret Stumpp.

There are times now when the phone in her office rings and the voice asks to speak to Mark. And depending on the nature of the call and her mood, she relishes a certain answer.

"Oh, him," Maggie Stumpp says. "We got rid of him a long time ago."

Transgender Good News
by Pat Conover
A review by Kaitlin Acres

"Transgender Good News" is different and more challenging than I expected when given the book to review. It is a book that should be read by many of the professionals that are making a living and forming careers dealing with the lives of transgender people. This book also gives a good foundation for transgender people to feel good about themselves. For those who feel the sting of judgement from some conservative Christians "Transgender Good News" is just that.

Pat Conover is a person of considerable experience and skill. She has a Masters degree in Theology from Chicago University. She studied under Paul Tillich, one of the great progressive theologians of the 20th century. She shows the same progressive, critical theological position. Ms Conover also has a PhD in Sociology from Florida State University. Her education and experience over the past 35 years as well as her personal life give her solid qualifications to author this book.

A good half of the book is given to reviewing the science that has developed over the past fifty years. The findings in the areas of Psychology, Psychiatry, and the results of Clinical investigations are reviewed. They are all found wanting judged from solid objective scientific criteria. Of course these conclusions are themselves open to review and criticisms. However it is hoped that such review will be done with the same degree of objective honesty that this reviewer finds in Ms. Conover's work.

A major criticism by the author of the many theories of the causes of gender non-conformity is that they do not deal with the complexities and diversity of life. Too many researchers and clinicians are looking for simplistic answers. Ms. Conover uses the analogy of looking for the "needle in the haystack". Perhaps there is no needle it is the nature of the haystack. She then offers her

own suggestion for gender diversity. Her presentation is not, for myself, without problems. However for the most part it "fits comfortably" with my 60 plus years of gender experience.

In the field of theology the same critical work is done with similar results. Transgender people who read this work will indeed find good news. For congregations who wish to improve their level of acceptance of transgender people or indeed all expressions of the Queer community will find helpful suggestions.

In one section there is a particularly sensitive and helpful support for parents who find that their child has gender or sexual orientation issues. This section could well be copied and used as a handout at the clinics established to attempt to assure that children grow up to meet the prevailing social norms.

This book will not be found to be an easy read for some people. Indeed the author assumes and states that some people may skip some chapters which are quite technical. However Ms Conover compensates for this by giving short reviews of her conclusions at several points in the book.

I recommend this book, I am pleased to have had the opportunity of reading and reviewing it.

Kaitlin Acres

Transgender Good News
by Pat Conover, 2002
New Wineskins Press, 12 Wessex Rd., Silver Spring, MD 20910-5437, ISBN 0-97182563-7

Holly Devor was, by Aaron Devor's account, a strange, conspicuous woman.

Even though she did a pretty good "woman" act, it became increasingly like contortionist's work and, ultimately, not very persuasive to others. "I never fit well as a girl or woman," said Mr. Devor, whose announcement that he is going to live as a man recently swept the University of Victoria campus.

Today, the university's Dean of Graduate Studies appears happy to conform to a conservative image more typical of men who run $3-million enterprises: Striding into his spare, elegant office, Mr. Devor projects confidence and control. He wears a dark grey suit and black tie with a blue shirt just over-large enough to hide any shape that might suggest he was once a woman.

He looks much younger than 51, with smooth skin, thick hair and light blue eyes that appraise from behind large-lensed glasses. In the manner of men used to commanding space, even at 5-feet-6, his hand gestures are expansive, the right leg crosses the left widely when he sits, he shrugs his shoulders loosely.

Aaron Devor is a man in full, if not in anatomy. A former portrait photographer himself, he peppers a photographer with questions about the best way to pose: It is suggested he might stand beside a stunning portrait of Katharine Hepburn by Canadian artist Myfanwy Pavelic that hangs in his office. Mr. Devor says no, the juxtaposition might reflect his feminine side too much. That would be inappropriate.

Like many hitting 50, Holly Devor wanted sweeping changes in her life. So the sociologist was thrilled last spring to win her big, new job as graduate studies dean at UVic. Recently, she announced her name would be Aaron H. Devor and she would be living as a man.

"You reach a point in mid-life where you realize that you don't have forever," Mr. Devor said. The time had come to move closer to "a better representation" of who he is, and that feels good. He is keeping H as his middle initial as a reminder of his former life. Although Mr. Devor knew when he applied for the $102,000-a-year job that

living as a man might be in the cards, he didn't talk to university officials about it. "It was a private matter," he said, "and not relevant to my qualifications. I wanted to get the job based on my record."

As dean, Mr. Devor orchestrates more than 100 graduate programs that involve 2,400 students and scores of faculty and staff. In such a position, he is well-placed to bring to the mainstream all kinds of debate to challenge the status quo, and he is an internationally recognized expert in one area that has been brewing in university lecture rooms for more than a decade: gender, sex and sexuality. Once a marginal area, gender studies are gaining ground as formerly hidden and isolated members of the "transgendered" community discover each other via the Internet and research opportunities grow.

Mr. Devor says his work indicates that two genders aren't enough -- that people can define their own place on a sexuality continuum. And while gender researchers say the genitalia usually associated with being a man or woman does not determine gender identity, many people are working hard to get the sexual hardware they want. When and how young Holly started to feel ill at ease as a female is not open for discussion. Mr. Devor would speak about personal struggle only in the vaguest terms.
"I don't want to spend a lot of time talking about the dim, distant past.
My ability to conform [as a female] has been challenging from the beginning."

Holly Devor studied psychology at York University, and after moving to Vancouver in 1975, she held a variety of jobs including portrait photographer and printer, as well as being involved in feminist, gay and lesbian politics. Then she zigzagged through studies in physics at Simon Fraser University, a master's degree in communications at SFU, then a PhD in sociology at the University of Washington. After arriving at UVic in 1989, her academic ambition became clear: Holly Devor moved from visiting lecturer in sociology through various levels of professorship and gained tenure, which ensures job security, eventually becoming associate dean of social sciences and finally dean of graduate studies. She has a reputation as a superb instructor, one of only 10 recipients in Canada of a 3M fellowship in 2000 that recognizes excellence in teaching as well as leadership and commitment to the improvement of university teaching.

She received the 1995 University of Victoria Alumni Teaching Award, which cites the professor's fairness, scrupulousness and innovative techniques. She has written two books. One is called Gender Blending, in which she examines the social construction of gender. Another, called FTM: Female-to-Male Transsexuals in Society, tracks individuals who make the same kind of change Mr. Devor is making.

While "transsexual" typically describes people who have had at least some sex-change surgery and who take hormones to further the change, "transgendered" is a broader term referring to people who live as the other sex, whether or not they have had sex-change surgery. Transgendered people may feel they are neither gender, or both, or they may feel they belong to a gender other than what their sexual organs would dictate. According to Mr. Devor, people can be transgendered on the basis of their feelings about themselves and may appear "ambiguously gendered" to others.

Holly Devor always dressed in pants and presented herself as a masculine woman: The only change people on campus say they have seen in the dean lately is a shorter haircut. His voice is clearly male. Mr. Devor wouldn't reveal whether he is undergoing surgery for his transition, which can include anything from removal of breast tissue to construction of a penis. He would say only that he is

transgendered and making physical changes. "Those are intimate details," he said.

His partner of 13 years, he said, is having a tougher time losing that identity. Rather than being Holly's lesbian partner, Lynn Greenhough is now the wife of Aaron. He expects she will rise to the challenge: As well as having the support of family and friends, the two are involved with Victoria's tightly knit Jewish community. Ten years ago, they were united in a Jewish commitment ceremony.

Life is less angst-ridden now that he has made his choice, Mr. Devor said. He had worried before applying for the dean's job that a possible gender change might be career-ending. Or it might force search committee members into choosing Holly Devor even if they had valid reasons not to, simply to avoid appearing biassed. "I felt I was protecting all of us" by not discussing the issue, he said.

By the time he actually took over the dean's office in July, Mr. Devor said, he knew he would be going ahead with his decision to live as a man. He discussed it with UVic president David Turpin, who called the dean's move courageous. "Aaron is an incredible scholar and teacher and is doing an amazing job," Mr. Turpin said. Because they must abide by federal contract rules, universities hire and promote with equity in mind. So is the search committee dismayed that they have ended up with a straight white guy in a suit rather than the woman -- and a lesbian at that -- that they believed they were promoting? "No, I didn't lose that check mark in my equity box," said search committee chair Jamie Cassels, who says this particular position was not officially "preferential," a situation that does require a certain profile of candidate. "Yes, we have one less woman around the deans' table, but we have a transgendered dean. It is an educational moment for us."

Mr. Turpin's letter to the advisory council and senior faculty urges the university community to co-operate with Mr. Devor and to be supportive. "We understand fully that it may take some time to adjust to this," says the letter, also signed by Mr. Cassels and Mr. Devor. "Dr. Devor would, for example, prefer from now on to be addressed using masculine pronouns."

While Mr. Devor reports nothing but total support, off-the-record reactions are across campus. Comments vary from shock to yawns to worries about one-on-one meetings. There are bawdy jokes as well as bravos.

Only one thing seems to prevent life as a man from being a totally happy thing for Mr. Devor: He will miss the intimate friendships women have in which they talk about their feelings openly. "Men are simply not accustomed to [doing] that," he says. "That's a big price to pay."

The Gender Binary Is "The Elephant in the Room," by Samantha Perrin
Santa Cruz's Lee Maranto. "You try to avoid it, you don't talk about it, and everyone tries to ignore it. But the elephant is screaming," he says.

"Until we start to break that system down," says Dana Rivers, "and to see that it's okay to be one, the other, in between, or none, and that God made us, too, we won't see change."

TRANS PRIDE

In a city nearby there exists a group of females who, having changed sex through surgery, still consider themselves transsexual. They want to hold a celebration, called "Trans Pride" with attendance restricted to others like themselves. Very interesting!

In discussing 'trans' issues with others I find that 'trans' seems to mean different things to different people. Even within our small group I find it difficult to focus on issues because the term is so widely interpreted. Contrary to correct English usage of the prefix, it seems that

we, each, want to make our own definition. As a result, we sound like the biblical Tower of Babel, each speaking in a different tongue.

So, just for a moment, I would like to focus on the prefix 'trans'. I use the term 'prefix' because, despite our common use of the term as a noun, 'trans' is not a word. It is, according to The Concise Oxford Dictionary, "a verbal element placed at the beginning of a word to qualify meaning." Further, 'trans' is used to connote, "across, beyond, on or to the other side, through, or into a different state or place." In other words, the prefix connotes a state of transition, not one which is fixed. Be that as it may, English is a living language, and 'trans' is fast becoming a word through common usage.

Gosh, I even used 'trans' as a word in the first sentence of this article! Obviously if there is no such thing as a 'trans' issue what I should have said is something like, "In discussing issues concerning transsexuals and transgendered people..."

My how we twist verbiage to suit our needs when we do not possess even the basics of the language we profess to speak! If one was to be semantically correct, there is no such thing as 'Trans' Pride! Is it any wonder that we are not able to get across to society at large just what it is that we are saying? If we, ourselves, use the prefix as a word, and then assign a myriad of meanings to it – if we, ourselves, cannot make ourselves understood within our own community, – how can we expect society at large to understand us? Just what is 'Trans'?

Let's say that you are travelling from Halifax to Vancouver by air. By definition you are said to be in a state of transition. Once you arrive in Vancouver you are no longer the air. You are in Vancouver. You are no longer in that state of transition between the two places. Am I getting to something here? You bet!

Using the same analogy if one is in the process of changing physical sex, one is in a state of transition between being sexually male and sexually female. Once the transition has been completed one has "arrived". The state of sexual transition is over. In that sense, a transsexual person is one who is "in between". Once the physical change has been made they are either male or female in the eyes of society. We have a problem with that.

It has been said that it takes more than being female to be a woman. And, of course, the corollary is also true. It takes more than being male to be a man. We in the trans world know that all too well. Society at large seems not to accept us when they find out that we are trans people.

"You may look like a woman and think like a woman, but you are NOT one of us, so don't think you can invade our space and take over."

"You think you are a man? You haven't got the balls! Ha ha ha!"

So gender enters the picture!

Yes Ma'am! Yes, Sir! Now we're talking 'gender', a whole new 'ball of wax'.

Whereas sex is a physical thing, gender is of the mind, a societal construct. It is without a basis in fact! Yet, recent studies indicate that this 'mind state' is, in all probability, hard-wired from before birth, unchangeable, and not necessarily related to the sexual organs with which you first appeared on this planet.

What, then, is a transgendered person? Well, by the above definition he, or she, has a gender identity which lies somewhere between man and woman.

The problem with this definition is one which has been laid upon us by the society in which we were raised and in which we now live. Our present day society is based upon the two polar extremes of male and

female; a binary construct. Either you are totally male, (whatever that is), or you are totally female, (whatever that is).

But those extremes have never been defined. As people generally see it there is no reason to define them. You are either male or female, no need to even make up your mind. Just have a gander at what lies between your legs, silly. What you think you are is totally irrelevant. Indeed, if you think otherwise you are sick!

And that is wherein the societal problem lies. (But that must remain to be explored at another time and place.)

It is quite understandable, therefore, that those who have fully changed from one sex to the other want to blend in with the rest of society's way of thinking. That way, if fully hidden within society, they are left alone to live out their lives in relative safety. They have conformed to present day society's rules. They have bought into the bipolar structure. They are perpetuating the very thing that caused them so much turmoil in the first place. But then, they are no longer trapped in the wrong body, are they? They are free to take up a new life, one diametrically opposite to the sex to which they were assigned at birth.

Having reached their goal, are they transgendered, really? Well, they could be. But if they considered themselves neither man, nor woman, in the first place I would question the need for a sex change. Put another way, why would one whose gender is somewhere between pure man and pure woman, (whatever those states are defined as), mutilate their body so?

It is my guess that those who undergo a change of sex, and who still consider themselves as somewhere between man and woman, are those who are in trouble. They are the ones who make statement such as, "You are only a cross dresser. At the end of the day you can change back to being a man. I cannot. How can you understand where I am coming from?"

Logically, if one is a woman, and has changed physical sex to reflect the female, why on earth would they even consider "changing back to being a man" at the end of the day? It is beyond comprehension. And why call attention to one's self if you want to blend in with the rest of society?

Yes, there are those who still consider themselves transsexual after having undergone a change of sex. Why? My guess is that they are still transgender but do not realize it.

But how wrong I can be! In discussing this issue with one who is truly a transsexual, one who feels that she could not continue in this life without a full transition, I am learning to think differently. She says:

"Many of us proudly identify as TS, and we see power and strength in that identification, for many reasons. My reality is that I am a transsexual woman. That is what I identify as, and what I identify as...who I identify as...are my own concerns and my own concerns only. To suggest that identification as a transsexual woman is somehow inappropriate or selling myself short is missing the real point. It is a powerful, pride-filled identification. I am not "simply" a woman. No woman is.

Some women proudly define as feminist women. Others as women of colour. I am a feminist woman and a *transsexual* woman. Unless you identify as one yourself, I can understand how it might be difficult to appreciate the power and comfort and pride in that self-identification as TS."

So now, finally, to the original issue of "pride", "Trans Pride", and in particular "Trans Pride" the way the women mentioned at the start of this article seem to be meaning it. We need to ask, "Just what is it that they

are trying to say to society at large? What is it they are saying that they are proud of?" Are they saying that they are proud to be "truly" men or "truly" women? Are they saying that they are proud that they have snuck in through the back door of the other sex? Oops! Did I say "sex"? Did I not mean "gender"? Hmm, I'll leave that for you to figure out.

Is it not time to really examine who we are, as a community, with all its diversity? Is it not time to challenge society with its binary construct? Is it not time to correct the injustices perpetrated upon our community by a society that tries to force us into its bipolar mould? And, what sort of "front" do we need to present in doing so? Is the approach being taken by those transsexual women mentioned in the introduction to this article, in particular, the way to go?

Is "pride" in having modified one's body to represent the opposite sex the answer? You decide.

EGALE Canada, Release: De-Listing of Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS) an Injury to Public Health, EGALE advances equality and justice for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people, and their families, across Canada

September 26, 2003 : An important Human Rights hearing was held this week to determine whether or not the Ontario government has violated the Ontario Human Rights Code by de-listing sex re-assignment surgery for transsexual persons in the Province.

"EGALE Canada supports the case of the four transsexual individuals who are taking the government to task for denigrating the dignity of transsexuals by cutting off funding for the medical procedure that would allow them to live a fuller life," says Laurie Arron, EGALE's Director of Advocacy.

"Even the government of Alberta understands that the benefits of providing access to this vital service is of benefit not only to the individuals concerned but to society as a whole," Mr. Arron continued. Alberta, along with British-Columbia and Saskatchewan, funds sex re-assignment surgery.

"As a transsexual woman attempting to get an university education and lead a productive life. I am saddened that the Ontario government no longer deems it necessary to fund the procedure that would complete my transition," declares EGALE board member Susan Gapka. "For individuals with modest economic means such as myself, the government's decision signifies that I cannot hope to fulfill my desire to complete the transition to my appropriate gender. It imposes hardship and heartache on me and others in similar circumstances."

"The procedure was funded in Ontario since 1969 but the Conservative Government de-listed the procedure in October 1998, effectively cutting off funding for sex reassignment surgery," said Mr. Arron. "This is not about money, it is about justice. In the 30 years that the procedure was listed there were on average 6 people approved for the surgery each year, at an average cost of $28,000 each. Relative to the health budget for Ontario, this is pocket change for the government." EGALE strives to support trans people in their struggle for equality and justice.

EGALE has supported Michelle Josef in her Charter challenge to the de-listing of sex reassignment surgery in Ontario, Kimberly Nixon in her human rights challenge to being excluded from consideration as a volunteer in a women's shelter, and the inclusion of "gender identity" as a prohibited ground of discrimination in the North-West Territory's human rights legislation.

Further information

Since this news release there have been many developments and hours of legal back and forth behaviours which bring us

to the point of a realistic expatiation that SRS and even greater support for basic medical care of trans identified individuals in Ontario will be covered under OHIP.
For Up to date Information : Laurie Arron, Director of Advocacy, 613-230-1043, laurie@egale.ca

Fake IDs for Social Justice
By Stephanie M. Skier

I never expected that I would end up spending my summer making fake ID's These ID's do not falsely purport to be state-issued ID's, as would fake ID's that the under-21 crowd might use to try to buy alcohol. These ID cards are meant to assist people whose names and genders listed on their state ID's to not match with the names they use and the genders they present everyday. If you have always felt comfortable in the "male" or "female" sex that is listed on your driver's license, and you have always presented yourself as a gender that people associate with that sex, then you may have never thought that this ID category would present such a major problem for people.

I am working at the Sylvia Rivera Law Project (SRLP), a non-profit organization that works to guarantee that all people are free to self-determine our gender identity and expression, regardless of income, and without facing harassment, discrimination or violence. SRLP advocates for the rights of transgender, transsexual, intersex, and other gender variant people. (Note: transgender means people whose internal sense of gender differs from the male or female sex they were assigned at birth. Transsexual generally refers to people who have taken or plan to take medical steps such as surgery or hormone treatment to modify their bodies to more appropriately reflect their gender identity. Intersex describes people born with sex chromosomes, external genitalia, or an internal reproductive system that is not considered "standard" for either male or female.)

Identification documents are a tool of gatekeeping—just think of all the buildings and services someone can access only with a Harvard ID. Gender gatekeeping happens too, in many ways that don't all involve ID cards. There are stereotypes about what a man or a woman should be, and of who counts as a man or a woman. In the last century, the women's movements and the gay and lesbian movements helped break down some aspects of these stereotypes. But these gender stereotypes are still are going strong, and people who do not easily fit into the binary gender system of man/woman and male/female are punished for their gender transgressions.

For people who do not look like the legal sex listed on their ID, access to even the most basic facilities can be incredibly difficult. We see people who have been denied access to college buildings, gyms, and public pools because they present themselves as a gender that is different from what is listed on their ID. If the name and sex listed on one's visa, social security card, or other work-related documentation does not match a transgender person's presentation, then that person will have a very hard time getting a job, especially when documentation troubles couple with societal hatred of transgender people to discriminate against transgender people in employment. Because of severe and persistent discrimination in housing, employment and education, transgender people remain disproportionately in poverty. Most of the institutions that poor people have to navigate (e.g. homeless shelters, group foster homes, prisons and jails, drug treatment, etc.) are gender-segregated, and for people whose gender identity or expression does not match their legal sex, these systems become especially inaccessible and unsafe.

When the legal sex listed on one's ID "outs" someone as transgender, that person is put at risk for harassment and violence. Violence against transgender people is endemic in

our society, but such hate crimes are difficult to enumerate because they often go unreported due to risks that the charges will not be taken seriously and that the crime victim will be blamed. When a transgender person reports a hate crime, they are often arrested themselves, says Mara Kiesling of the National Center for Transgender Rights. People can and do legally change their names for many reasons, such as marriage or divorce. But people who try to change from a name that is recognized as one gender to one that is recognized as another face specific hurtles in their name change process. Transgender people who request name changes in court generally need to file medical affidavits as well as publish an announcement in a newspaper that outs them as transgender. To change one's legal sex, one must produce evidence that one has undergone even more medical treatment. These barriers often prevent transgender people from having legal documentation that matches their gender identity. Furthermore, more pressing survival issues such as accessing safe housing and health care and avoiding harassment and violence take precedence over documentation concerns.

On one particularly hot day this summer, some transgender teenagers were taking refuge from the heat in our air-conditioned office and talking about how they really wanted to go to the pool. They had legitimate concerns that the attendant at the public pool would scrutinize them because they are transgender, would demand ID, and then turn them away from the pool or would force them to use a locker room that was inappropriate to their gender identity. Then we came up with an idea: why not make our own ID's? There's nothing against the law about issuing membership cards, as is done by countless places of employment, clubs, parties, and organizations.

I quickly developed a reputation as designated ID-maker. On the ID's I make, people list their own names, the names they use. For the "Gender" field on the template (notice that the field isn't called "Sex"), people can write in whatever they want. Male, female, transgender, MTF (male-to-female), FTM (female-to-male), intersex—all of these are fine options, as is any other identification people want to list. People are also welcome to leave the space blank, if they do not want to define or disclose their gender identity. I believe strongly that people have a right to self-define their own gender identity. People have struggled hard to find their own words for describing and affirming their own personal gender, and I am not going to be a gender gatekeeper who tells people that they can't be the identity that they are living.

These ID's won't work in every situation, but they are a start. In addition to helping people gain access to regulated spaces, they can also give people the confidence that goes along with having an authority officially back up their identity. And armed with these SRLP IDs, the teenagers were able to get into the pool and cool off.

Stephanie M. Skier is a Social Studies and Women's Studies concentrator in Currier House. Skier is spending this summer getting the kind of gender studies education that doesn't happen in a Harvard classroom.

Northern Sash, February 2004, Caught in the net by; Joanne Law (Reprinted), Famous Transgender Moments in Our History.

Records show that transgenderism has been around forever. In fact, the records go back to 1504 BC.

The great expansion of Egypt during the New Kingdom was carried out by a single dynasty of pharaohs, which lasted 250 years. Great ambition characterized one redoubtable woman, The Queen Dowager *Hatshepsut*. After the death of her husband, she became regent for her young stepsons and her nephew *Tuthmosis III*. Seizing the throne, she assumed the functions, the insignia and even the dress of her husband, a pharaoh, and ruled for 20 years.

In the 17th century, Abby d'Choisy was the third son of a strong willed mother who dressed her son in girls' clothes and later, in women's clothes. She further applied depilatory lotions to his face during adolescence so his bread would not grow. After his mother's death, he still dressed in female clothes and appeared regularly both in Paris and in the provinces. He became a successful actress in the Bordeaux theatre and was sent to Rome to attend the election of the Pope. He attended dressed *en femme*. While residing in Italy, he lived several years as a woman. He was also part of an entourage of Ambassador Louis XIV, and wore the most feminine evening gown, make-up and jewelry at events.

Moving forward to the 18th and 19th centuries, Lord Cornbury was the governor of the Royal Province of New Jersey (1702 to 1708). His portrait hangs in the halls of the New York Historical Society where it has been a subject of interest. Lord Cornbury is seen dressed as a woman in full garb. It is claimed that as Queen Anne's relative and representative he believed he should represent her as literally as possible, and in all respects, as faithfully as he could.

In contrast, *Chevalier d'Eon de Beaumont* was a diplomat who became an actress. Born in 1728, he grew up sort of short and plump with a soft voice. He was sent to Russia in 1755 where he dressed like a woman in the courts of the Empress Elizabeth in Saint Petersburg for the purpose of espionage. He was then sent to London in 1762 as minister Plenipotentiary for the French Foreign Services. He served for fifteen years and became subject of controversy. Was Eon male or female, French or English, good or bad? The London Stock Exchange took bets on his gender. Betting was so heavy that d'Eon feared kidnapping by those who had the highest stakes on his sex. Chavalier d'Eon continued o serve in the King's Covenant without revealing his true gender. At his death in 1810, an autopsy proved he was a man, but the English court ruled she was a woman. Still the verdict is out.

The Hasty Pudding Theatricals at Harvard College, founded in 1795, the oldest of all the Ivy League schools, has a long tradition of drag shows. Political, financial and future leaders of the world got some of their initial public exposure at Harvard's cross-dressing extravaganzas. Hasty Pudding, to a certain extent, mainstreamed and legitimized female impersonation, and is still a part of Harvard College to day. For all of Hasty Pudding's repute, the largest drag club remains the Bohemian Club in San Francisco; it has 2300 members (without forgetting La Cage aux Folles, yet another world renowned troop company).

Gender-bending has also been alive and well in various forms of art and culture. Madam Butterfly is a crowd-pleasing Broadway musical featuring a 20 year-old love affair between a transvestite Geisha girl and a French diplomat. People lined up at the movie theatre to see us: *Tootsie*, *The Crying Game*, *Glen/Glenda*, *Yenta*, *Planet Nine from Outer Space*, *Some Like It Hot*, *Victor/Victoria*, and *Normal*. Actors of stature like Lawrence Olivier, Dustin Hoffman, Ed Wood Jr., Tony Curtis, Jack Lemon and Julie Andrews did not shy from portraying cross-dressing or transgenderism on the big screen, some even winning the Oscar for their performance. We have also been in people's homes through the magic of television: Flip Wilson, Dana Carvy, Milton Berle, *The Kids In The Hall* and *CODCO* are other reminders that our community exists. All these people dressed -- latently or overtly -- in response to audience interest, to emphasize their own trademark. Was their success a central part of their own inner being? Cartoons also had their share of cross-dressing: Bugs Bunny, Elmer Fudd, The Big Bad Wolf and Peter Pan.

I could go on and on, but I think

I've made my point that cross-dressing and transgenderism are indeed a part of our culture… so why is it still taboo for a male to identify as a female or a female to identify as a male in public?

Why Are There So Many Loud Voice on the Net? By Margo Ross

As a trans identified person, I like many others initially went to the internet looking to see if I was as alone as I felt. Just as in your case and those who are interested in knowing about being transgendered we discovered a vast number of individuals posting personal web pages, chartrooms and yes information on groups like Gender Mosaic. When I first attended a Gender Mosaic event, I was pleased to see the forty people there but wondered where were these massive numbers of individuals who present openly on the net?

Over the six years that I have been involved with Gender Mosaic, be that at our monthly meetings, Pride Celebration, Public awareness sessions for Universities and Colleges or just plan out for dinner. Again I wonder why are the so few trans people present.

In the past few months, I have been participating in the EGALE Trans list discussions. Out of no where there appear to be an endless supply of trans people with strong opinions, forceful beliefs and an urgency for full equality be that in assess to medical services, SRS, political and human rights and employment law changes not to forget public education. So where do these internet trans individuals come from? Ok, I know the net is a world wide system but they are all Canadian. Yes as hard to believe as it may sound many of them are in the eastern Ontario region.

So why are they also not as passionately participating publicly in the various transgender groups, trans allied support services and out in public as strongly as on the net.

Are we settling for a new form of closeted trans people? Publicly out on the net and in discussion rooms but invisible in the full light of public living? For far too long it has evident that our lack of full public presence is a strong contributing factor to our lack of rights, protections and freedoms. If we are not seeing there is no need to include an unknown group if that group even exists beyond three or four people.

So I would like to take my hat off to those who are standing in the full public view and saying here I am and I am not alone but I am fighting for my job in British Columbia and Quebec, rights to SRS in Ontario and full OHIP coverage and proving time and time again one person at a time that freed transgender spirits make even happier people and all of society wins.

So the next time you go to the net to share who you are and what you believe is fair and honourable for you and those who love you consider also sharing it in person with someone else face to face.

IT IS Your Mail Box
The Gender Mosaic, PO Box 7421, Vanier Ontario. K1L 8E4 can be used by all members for their packages, delivery of books or magazines.

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